

Standing on the Runway Crossing

By: Rebecca Moon

As I stand on the runway crossing of the former Marine Corps Air Station El Toro, I see the new buildings and houses of Great Park all around. Deep inside of me, there is regret and mourning as I think about how this land used to be a military base. I also think about the demolished buildings that soldiers were once stationed in. I believe that people should remember the services and sacrifices of these soldiers, though they are masked under the modernness. The runway crossing's shape reminds me of the American Red Cross, which aided U.S. soldiers during the Korean War. The founder of the American Red Cross was Clara Barton, an American nurse who served in the American Civil War. Due to her efforts, my ethnic country, South Korea, was able to escape years of war.

Clara Barton was born on December 25, 1821, in Oxford, Massachusetts. At the age of eleven, Barton nursed her injured older brother, Stephen Barton. She started off as a teacher, then later started working different jobs in the US Patent Office of Washington, D.C. before resigning due to the lack of women's rights. She became a nurse for soldiers fighting in the Civil War. It was very brave of Clara Barton to risk her life on the bloody battlefields. She is an example of someone who showcased courage and selflessness.

Clara Barton made it her mission to provide assistance to the soldiers of the Civil War. She was soon named head nurse in the medical unit of the Union Army, even though she hadn't been given proper medical training. After the war ended, Barton continued serving by searching for missing soldiers and marking the graves of the deceased. Due to Clara Barton's perseverance and commitment, more than 22,000 missing soldiers were located. Her service impacted the families of these missing soldiers deeply. There should be more people like Clara Barton who work devotedly to help others.

After the war, when she went to Switzerland to recover her health, Clara Barton discovered the International Red Cross, and convinced President Rutherford B. Hayes to establish an American Red Cross. The American Red Cross helped South Korea by aiding its soldiers during the Korean War. Even today, the American Red Cross is constantly helping North and South Korea with their communications by maintaining the Seoul-Pyongyang hotline, which is a series of several telephone lines. The unexpected impact of Clara Barton's idea of the American Red Cross in the Korean War makes me think of the runway crossing. One of the lines is the American Red Cross, and the other is the Korean War. They start from different directions, but in the end, they intersect right in the middle.

Clara Barton's perseverance, courage, and selflessness aided the soldiers of the Civil War and eventually, those of the Korean War. Her dedication helped others hear her voice and ideas, and her efforts helped people remember the history of these bloody wars. However, history is still being forgotten everyday. Historical sites are destroyed, such as the former Marine Air Station Santa Ana, which was recently burned down. The historical hangar of the former base, which represented the World War II era, had been a landmark for so long. I also noticed how the two former buildings of El Toro Base were demolished recently, as they were right beside my school. Even though there is no physical proof anymore to commemorate the services of those who fought in the war, people should remember their sacrifices and teach others.